**Restore Rotorua wins an independent commissioner panel to hear resource consent applications on emergency housing** – 11 October 2021

Trevor Newbrook, Spokesperson for Restore Rotorua welcomed the Council’s decision to appoint independent hearings commissioners to decide on notification and the substantive resource consent applications for emergency housing made by Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

“Common sense has prevailed and independent commissioners will hear from those most affected. Restore Rotorua will be making submissions and we hope that anyone else affected will take the opportunity to do the same. The homeless need to be housed but is Fenton St/Fairy Springs Road and Lakes Road really the best place for all of these people to live? Mum Dad, 2 kids and a dog jammed into a studio with little open space?”

Restore Rotorua Inc. received a response on Friday after writing to the Council on Thursday.

“Rotorua Lakes Council (**RLC**) acknowledges the concerns your clients have raised in relation to  
notification regarding Kāinga Ora’s resource consent for transitional housing [**Boulevard Motel**] and the six resource consent applications for emergency housing lodged by the Ministry for Housing and  
Urban Development.”

Restore Rotorua Inc. requested the Council to refer the remaining 6 applications to an independent commission panel so that the applications could be **assessed together**, in a fair and impartial manner, where community views on the consents could be heard. This includes a hearing on whether or not the consent should be notified.

“These applications and the Boulevard Resource consent that has been granted are all within a 2 km radius so how can decisions about environmental effects not be considered cumulatively? That makes no sense.”

“Restore Rotorua also asked that all six (6) consents ought to be given to an  
independent commissioner to determine the issue of notification. This provides  
assurance to our client that a neutral and objective expert is assessing the applications.”

The Council has now said that “RLC is proceeding to engage and appoint independent hearings commissioners with appropriate delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of RLC as the consent authority on:

1. The appropriate notification process to apply to each application.  
   RLC proposes to give the commissioners delegated authority to conduct a  
   notification hearing to assist their decision making on the appropriate  
   notification process for each of the six applications; and
2. The subsequent substantive decision to grant or decline each application.  
   Again, RLC proposes to give the commissioners delegated authority to exercise  
   all relevant RLC functions as a consent authority under the RMA including  
   directing appropriate pre-hearing meetings, mediation and commissioning  
   reports and conducting hearings for any application that is limited or publicly  
   notified for submissions (or where a hearing is otherwise requested by MHUD  
   for any application that is non-notified).”

The Council confirmed that they have yet to make a decision of whether to notify the six MHUD resource consent applications and has requested further information from MHUD.

“The battle is not over to stop Rotorua city centre from becoming an emergency and transitional housing dumping ground. We will be participating in the hearings to protect the economy and character of our city, and ensure emergency tenants are properly housed.”

**Trevor Newbrook**

**Chair of Restore Rotorua Incorporated**

**For all enquiries, contact Trevor on 027 4778 571**